

made by American women. More than 400,000 women served during World War II. We are humbled by their love and dedication to our Nation.

I ask my colleagues to join with me today in honoring and recognizing CAPT Dorothy Stratton for her service to the United States, the U.S. Coast Guard and its Reserve, and for the inspiration and legacy she created for the women of this great Nation.●

RECOGNIZING MISSOURI ORGANIZATIONS

● Mr. BOND. Mr. President, I would like to take this opportunity to recognize the valuable efforts of the Missouri National Guard, Missouri School Boards' Association, and National Guard Bureau as they have collaborated to support Missouri's prototypical satellite/wireless communications efforts. They have significantly contributed to our knowledge and experience in delivering interagency, interoperable communications capabilities relevant to both the Nation and Show Me state.

The Missouri School Boards' Association has closely collaborated with the National Guard to demonstrate that a limited amount of Federal funding can be leveraged to provide for the creation of interagency, interoperable, satellite/wireless, disaster response communications capability, creating reliable local, State and Federal communications infrastructure. This capability can support a number of initiatives, including first responder training, distance learning, telemedicine, and local law enforcement. It is significant to note that a critical component of this demonstration effort is to prove that various agencies can leverage common, shared infrastructure, which reduces sustainment costs and improves government efficiency. Every indication is that this model can successfully support information security and network defense requirements.

Since beginning the Missouri effort, much has already been learned. Lessons learned include: interagency interoperability offers an opportunity to transform how we communicate and for significant cost avoidance, including the reduction of annual recurring costs; impediments to interagency interoperability are not because the technology is unavailable or because security requirements cannot be addressed; and challenges and opportunities related to successful interagency communications interoperability exist at all local, State, and Federal Government levels.

The Missouri National Guard has validated the use of affordable satellite technology to create reliable, redundant disaster response network communications. The National Guard has leveraged existing resources and teamed with State and Federal agencies to confirm the reliability and capabilities of a planned network. Ongoing activities to support these efforts,

resourced largely from federal FY05 funds, include defining the procurement process related to executing this effort; completing a foundational analysis, the development of "white papers," to define the precise relevance of the effort; completing required Department of Defense accreditation of deployable communications capabilities; completing a national survey of communications requirements, capabilities, and existing shortfalls to confirm that there is a national need for this type of capability; providing deployable communications capabilities for testing/validation. These capabilities will directly support the National Guard, as well as legitimize the concept that state government prior to and during times of emergency can leverage Guard equipment; and providing deployable communications capabilities to be shared with the Missouri School Boards' Association in order that the association, during non-emergency situations, can validate applications with schools.

With remaining Federal funds appropriated in fiscal year 2005, the Missouri School Boards' Association will also coordinate an effort to validate the ability to leverage emerging wireless technologies in a defined geographical area in Missouri. This demonstration will also validate the relevance of IPTV, Internet protocol television, with wireless technologies so that field-based educational opportunities can be transmitted "live" to school classrooms. From Federal fiscal year 2006 funds, the Missouri School Boards' Association will coordinate a wireless demonstration project in a second defined geographical area in Missouri. This project will incorporate lessons learned from the initial demonstration project in a defined geographical space.

Once again, I thank the Missouri National Guard, Missouri School Boards' Association, and National Guard Bureau for their work to support Missouri's prototypical satellite/wireless communications efforts. It is an outstanding example of collaboration.●

COMMENDATION TO THE "BACK TO BUSINESS" RADIO PROGRAM

● Ms. SNOWE. Mr. President, as chair of the Senate Committee on Small Business and Entrepreneurship, I rise today to commend the University of Maine and Machias Savings Bank for underwriting the "Back To Business" radio program hosted by Deb Neuman for a second year.

Heard on WVOM in Old Town, ME, Back To Business is an advice and news program geared specifically toward fostering the creation, development, and continued success of small businesses in Maine. It has been a strong, supportive, and unwavering voice for Maine's small businesses, providing an interactive forum that discusses pressing issues of the day, such as small business access to investment capital, regulatory, and tax compliance bur-

dens, and the lack of affordable health insurance options in Maine.

The small business owners that appear on "Back To Business" frequently cite Maine's business climate as challenging on several fronts. Moving forward, it is critical that we also think forward and equip America's small businesses with the knowledge and tools to confront the challenges of tomorrow so that they can create jobs and continue to strengthen our economy. I can proudly report that "Back To Business" offers Maine small businesses vital knowledge and useful tools and resources. We must not forget that the Federal and State governments should be partners, working together with the business community to support small businesses.

Small businesses create nearly three-quarters of all net new jobs, represent 97 percent of all business in Maine, and employ 61 percent of Maine's workers. Mainers are more than ever relying upon small business ownership as an alternative to the traditional workplace where the manufacturing industry and corporate America once offered life long futures for workers.

As chair of the Senate Small Business Committee, I have introduced an ambitious legislative agenda to break down small business barriers. I recently introduced a bill that would expand the Small Business Administration's Historically Underutilized Business Zones or HUBZones program to include rural Maine towns and regions that were previously ineligible. According to the SBA, 110 Maine businesses in 11 counties received more than \$12.7 million in HUBZone Program dollars in fiscal year 2005. Unfortunately, current law is preventing more regions in Maine from being certified as HUBZones. Under my bill, small businesses in rural Maine, including the Katahdin region, would be classified as HUBZones to qualify and compete for Federal contracts and subcontracts.

I have also worked hard to find a solution to the small business health insurance crisis. Small businesses in Maine and across the country are trapped in stagnant, dysfunctional insurance markets with premiums that are increasing at exponential percentage levels. Last year, I requested a Government Accountability Office Report that showed a startling market consolidation. In Maine, five large insurance companies control 98 percent of the market, leaving small businesses with few affordable coverage options.

This is why I have long championed legislation that would create Small Business Health Plans, which would allow small businesses to pool together nationally, to offer quality health insurance products to their employees at significantly lower costs. This year we came closer than ever before to passing SBHPs into law, and I will continue to push forward with my colleagues on both sides of the political aisle, to fashion bipartisan legislation that can be